

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

A communication network includes comprising at least one first and second terminals, nodes terminal, at least one second terminal, and a plurality of links. links, and at least first and second nodes. The first node is bidirectionally coupled to the first terminal through at least a the first link one of the links, and also is bidirectionally coupled to the second terminal through at least a the second link and the second node. Preferably, the The first node preferably includes comprises a plurality of communication paths, each of which is coupled at a first end thereof to at least one corresponding first link and . Second ends of the communication paths are all coupled to the second link, through a multiplexing device, and route routing signals between the first and second links. The first node also preferably includes comprises at least one an alternate communication path having a first end coupled through the multiplexing device to the second link, at least one a switch that is coupled to the alternate communication path, and a detector for detecting a failure in at least of a one of the communication path paths. A controller is coupled to the detector and the switch. The controller is responsive to the detector detecting a failure in at least one of the a communication path communication paths and controls for controlling the switch to couple the alternate communication path to a corresponding first link, thereby enabling a signal to be routed between that first and second links link and the second link through the alternate communication path.